

The Military Leader

Resources and Insight for Developing Leaders



40 Questions that Will Challenge Your Leadership[©]

A word of caution...if you honestly assess your leadership in response to these questions, you will discover areas of significant personal growth. When you study these questions with your team, be prepared for feedback that demands change. Consider spending some time on each question. Devote personal (and organizational) energy to uncovering all the lessons contained behind each simple statement. I guarantee it will only make you a more effective, more influential leader.

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Individual

- How much more effective would you be if you had total awareness of the impact of your actions on others? What would it take to find out?
- Is your need to prove you're in charge more important than your desire to develop your team by encouraging their input?
- Does your leadership style accurately represent your character, courage, and competence?
- How could you simplify your language to provide clarity to your organization?

- How do you evaluate your team? Do you recognize and encourage the team players? Or do you reward the achievers regardless of how their methods?

Self-Awareness

- What approach have you taken to assess the effectiveness of your own leadership traits?
- Does your leadership environment have a way for people to tell you that you're being a jerk?
- What determines how you react to failure? Your mood? The severity of the failure? The frequency of failures?
- What kind of "energy" does your organization get from you?
- Does your team feel like they can tell you you're wrong? How would you know if they did or didn't?

Decision Making

- How would situations turn out differently if you were slower to make judgments?
- What is your organization's "DNA" for reacting to events and information?
- What would your subordinates learn if they had more autonomy to solve their problems?
- Have you specified what decision authority your subordinate leaders can exercise?
- Do you give left/right limits and let your subordinates make their own decisions in that band? Or do you require everyone to do it 'your way?'

Interactions

- Are your conversations of the quality that people will learn from them?

- Does your speech elevate people or tear them down?
- How much difference would it make if you said 'Thank You' or 'Great Job' at least once an hour every day?
- Have you clarified how you expect your team to interact with each other? Does your team follow the "No Asshole Rule?"

Team Focused

- How much more capable would your team be if everyone cared less about their own success and more about the team's?
- What "no fail" traits does your organization espouse?
- Is your message clear enough so that even the lowest-ranking member can understand and implement it?
- Do you repeat your core message often enough for it to become common knowledge and a shared vision?
- How have you helped your own team be more productive, not only so that they can get more work done, but so that they could more easily pursue their true purpose?
- What is your threshold for what is an acceptable failure and what is not? Have you clarified your philosophy to your team?
- How can you better engage your subordinates to inform them of where they stand in the organization and how they can improve?

Growth

- What are your methods for acquiring new knowledge and developing ideas?
- Have you prioritized Leader Development but not given it due consideration on the calendar?
- How much more talented would you (and your team) be if you could internalize one professional lesson per day from books, speeches, articles, etc.?

- How do you develop your subordinates to be good citizens and not just good service members?

Efficiency

- What would you need to change about your life to become just 25% more efficient? What possibilities would doing so create?
- What else could you accomplish if you were able to delegate 50% of your activities to your subordinates?
- Review how you are currently delegating. Can you correlate underperformance with a lack of clarity in delegating authority?
- Take a look at your unit's guidance products or orders. What else could you provide your subordinates to make their jobs easier?
- How effective is your organization at killing off bad ideas that stifle progress? ...and good ideas that aren't good enough to maintain?
- What would your team be able to achieve if it wasn't committed to so many ideas?

Training

- How prepared is your team to face the physically and mentally exhaustive realities of combat? Have you replicated them in training?
- Are you in good enough physical shape to do battle tomorrow?
- What else could you be doing to prioritize readiness in your organization?
- Have you created an environment where subordinates have the freedom to be creative in training for combat?

What other questions should you be asking?...